



## **STATEMENT OF ETHICAL AND LEGAL STANDARDS**

This statement sets forth general guidelines to the ethical and legal standards applicable to the performance of County business. These standards are based upon the recognition that honesty and integrity are the cornerstones to ethical and legal conduct. All County employees share a mutual commitment to honesty and integrity in the workplace, and dedicate themselves to upholding the highest standards of conduct in the performance of their duties.

The County's commitment to the higher standards of ethical and legal conduct is in the recognition of its mission to serve the residents of the County of San Diego. The County is dedicated to creating a government that earns the support and respect of the public by being responsive and responsible. The citizens of the County are our customers who deserve to be treated fairly and honestly in their dealings with the County.

County government recognizes that its name is at stake and is defined by the quality of its services provided to the public. Practicing ethical and legal conduct is essential to the County's accomplishment of its mission and to the individual success of each employee of the County of San Diego.

The guidelines outlined in this statement are based on certain fundamental responsibilities of all County employees:

1. Treat the members of the public we serve, as well as your fellow employees, fairly and honestly at all times.
2. Perform your duties in compliance with all federal, state, and local law, and avoid any involvement in conduct known to be illegal, unethical, or improper.
3. Conduct your official County duties in conformance with the County's policies and procedures, and in accordance with the highest standards of ethical and legal conduct.
4. Use County funds and property with extreme care, guided by the exercise of prudent judgment and good business practices.

5. Create a work environment that promotes open and honest communications, and encourages the raising of ethical concerns without fear of retribution.
6. Assume responsibility for knowing, understanding and having a practical working knowledge of the laws and regulations applicable to your job responsibilities.

### **Equal Opportunity**

The County is committed to ensuring equal opportunity in all aspects of County operations. It is the policy of the County to comply with federal, state, and local laws affecting equal opportunity. Employment actions taken by County managers and supervisors shall be on the basis of job-related qualifications and merit without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, or veteran status. (*Reference: Board of Supervisors Policy No. C-17*)

### **Fraudulent Conduct in County Services**

The County is committed to protect against all improprieties in public programs and services. Integrity in the administration of County programs and services must exist to ensure the public's trust. It is critical that the County take whatever action is necessary to prevent and deter fraud and abuse which demonstrates commitment to protecting the public interest in essential public programs and services.

There shall be "zero tolerance" for fraud committed by County employees or contractors in the administration of County programs and provisions of County services. Fraud is the intentional: (1) perversion of truth for the purpose of inducing another in reliance upon the falsehood to part with something valuable or to surrender a legal right; or (2) false representation of a matter of fact, whether by word or by conduct, by false or misleading allegations, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, which deceives and is intended to deceive another so that the person shall act upon it to his/her injury. (*Reference: Board of Supervisors Policy No. A-120*)

### **Violence in the Workplace**

The County is committed to providing a work environment free from violence and from the threats of violence. It is the policy of the County that a zero tolerance standard shall apply to violent behavior, implied or actual, and to threats of violent behavior, from any person that is directed at other employees or the public at a County facility or in connection with County business. In conformance with this County policy, no County

employee shall engage in violent conduct or make threats of violence, implied or actual, at a County workplace or during the course and scope of performing County duties.

All threats of violence shall be taken seriously, and shall not be dismissed as harmless joking. Employees who witness instances or occasions of any employee or former employee making threats of engaging in acts of violence must report such matter immediately to their managers or supervisors (or if an emergency, report the emergency in accordance with the County's emergency procedures). (*Reference: Board of Supervisors Policy No. A-121*)

## **Discrimination and Harassment**

The County is committed to a work environment free from unlawful discrimination and harassment, including sexual, racial, religious, age, disability, or any other form of discrimination or harassment.

Unlawful sexual harassment in the workplace is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term of condition of an individual's employment; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or (3) such conduct is unwelcome or has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

If County employees become aware of any form of harassment occurring in the workplace, they must report immediately to their manager or supervisor. All credible reported incidents must be investigated promptly and management must take any appropriate action against the harasser, including any discipline consisting of possible removal from County service. (*Reference: Board of Supervisors Policy Nos, C-17, C-22, A-125*)

## **Drug and Alcohol Use**

The County is committed to maintaining a safe, healthful, and productive work environment. It is the responsibility of all County employees to perform their public services safely, effectively, and efficiently without being adversely affected or impaired in any way by the use or presence of alcohol or drugs. The County provides assistance through its Employee Assistance Program on a confidential basis for a County employee seeking help for a drug or alcohol-related problem. (*Reference: Board of Supervisors Policy No. C-25*)

## **Improper Gratuities**

The County is committed to ensuring that all County services and operations performed by County employees are provided honestly and fairly. It is improper to accept any gratuity in the form of compensation, preferential treatment, entertainment, service, or promise of future benefits in exchange for providing special favors, privileges, benefits, or services that otherwise would not have been provided.

Additionally, when on official County travel, County employees are not authorized to accept the payment of their travel expenses from persons/companies doing or seeking to do business with the County, unless waived by the Chief Administrative Officer when it is determined to be in the best interest of the County to do so. (*Reference: Board of Supervisors Policy No. D-7*)

### **Statement of Ethical and Legal Standards**

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, attest to these facts:

➤ I have received a copy of the document listed below:

❖ Statement of Ethical and Legal Standards

➤ I have reviewed this policy. I was afforded the opportunity to inquire as to any meaning that did not seem clear to me upon my review. The person witnessing my signature on this form is the person who made him/herself available to me for any questions that I had during my review and before my signature.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

(Witness signature must be the department representative  
who explained the policy to the employee)

(Note: File in official department personnel file.)